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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY [REDACTED] REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

INFORMATION REPORT**SECRET**

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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

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SUBJECT Penicillin Production and Availability
of Medicaments

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1. Recently the production of penicillin and sulfa drugs in Czechoslovakia has greatly increased. These drugs are manufactured by the newly organized national corporation "Biogena". In 1949 and even the beginning of 1950 this plant, manufacturing antibiotics and sulfa drugs, was a part of Státní Zdravotní Ustav (State Health Institute). The present manager of Biogena is Dr Mlochova, a recent member of the Communist Party (only nominally, however).

[REDACTED] Political boss of Biogena is Dr Malek. Biogena has under its administration several plants, the newest and biggest one, in Roztoky u Prahy, is the sole producer of penicillin in Czechoslovakia.

2. In August 1951 it was decided to move the big Orion Chocolate Plant from Prague, corner of Kurunni trida and Benesovska ulice, to Modrany, (50.1 N - 14.25 E), to release the premises to some new Biogena Plant. I do not know what this plant is supposed to manufacture.

3. There is still a shortage of penicillin in Czechoslovakia, but it is sold on doctors' prescriptions, and I believe there is some export to satellite countries too. [REDACTED] I needed penicillin for my ill child and I asked Dr Mlochova whether she had some US penicillin (I heard that Czech penicillin injections were very painful). She assured me, however, that the Czech penicillin was of the same quality as the US penicillin and no more painful to inject. At the same time I learned from her that the Czech-manufactured penicillin has to be injected every few hours, since the so-called "depotni" penicillin (US new type) is not yet manufactured in Czechoslovakia. She gave me, therefore, some US type penicillin manufactured in Denmark. This leads me to believe that some of the newest type penicillin has been imported from Denmark.

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4. It is very difficult at the present time to get medicaments in Czech pharmacies; it is even hard to obtain most common drugs, like aspirin. It is almost impossible to get glycerin. It might be true that under the promulgated national insurance act the vast majority of the Czech population is theoretically given free medicaments when sick, but the doctors have strict orders to prescribe medicaments only in the smallest quantities and in urgently needy cases. I believe that since the national insurance act went into effect, the scarcity of medicaments has been caused by the shortages of raw materials for their production, and rather extensive hoarding tendencies. Streptomycin is unobtainable for individuals and is used only in sanatoriums. It is administered to people under 45 years of age as a last resort only. I have heard that in some sanatoriums streptomycin is extracted from the urine of patients it has been administered to, and used again for other patients.
5. I have no information on imports of strategic medical supplies from South American countries.

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